one of the parties in the opposition in Pakistan National Assembly, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, led a four member delegation of Jamait Ulema-e-Islam (F) from July 15 to July 24, 2003. During his visit to India, he visited Amritsar, Sirhind, Deoband and Saharanpur and interacted with a cross section of media, analysts and political and religious leaders. He met Prime Minister on July 20, 2003. The meeting was in the nature of a courtesy call. During the meeting, the importance of greater people to people contacts between the two countries was *inter alia* emphasized.

Laying of underground cables

*277. SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that underground cables for telephones are not being laid at prescribed depth, particularly in rural areas;

(b) whether Government are aware that cables under Bihar Sharif Division, particularly from Nalanda to Daman Khandha are laid at a depth of only one feet due to which telephones remain non functional for months together; if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to order an independent enquiry into the matter; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE) (a) The cables are generally laid at the prescribed depth except at locations like rocky soil, culverts etc., where it is often not possible to do so and relaxation in depth is given by the empowered officers. Additional protection is provided at such places by use of split RCC pipes, GI pipes or by concreting. However, whenever it comes to notice that

cable has not been laid at proper depth suitable action is taken against the defaulting officials.

(b) Cables in Bihar Sharif Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCA) under Patna Secondary Switching Area (SSA) have been laid mainly in accordance with the prescribed depth including the 20 pair underground cable from Nalanda to Daman Khandha. Some damage had occurred to the cable from Nalanda to Daman Khandha in the past due to laying of water pipe by local authorities. This was attended to and damaged portion of the cable was ultimately replaced. Since then, the telephones have been working satisfactorily.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of above.

Indigenous products for import substitution

*278. SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Test House, in accordance with the charter of the organisation, is assisting industry in developing indigenous products for import substitution;

(b) if so, the number of such import substitutes developed;

(c) the details thereof since 1995, year-wise; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The details of the products in the indigenous development of which NTH assisted the Indian Industries are given in the enclosed Statement. (*See* below)

(d) Does not arise.